

SEN JOHN KENNEDY: Democrats' anti-ICE tantrum leaves Republicans with one option going forward



As the anti-ICE, pro-Karen wing has grown in prominence, Senate Democrats have developed a severe allergy to common-sense policies

For more than 70 days, Senate Democrats claimed that they shut down the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) because they wanted to reform Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). It's clear now that they shut down DHS out of fear of their own voters.

The loon wing of the [Democratic Party](#) — the folks who think Dr. Seuss is racist, Mr. Potato Head is sexist and children can change their genders at recess — is the largest and loudest segment of the Democratic Party. They hate our immigration laws. They want criminal illegal aliens to roam free while ICE officers rot in jail. And they have made it clear to every Democrat in office that a vote to fund ICE would haunt them for the rest of their natural lives.

But the American people don't want open borders, and they don't think cops are worse than criminals. They know it is bone-deep stupid to allow gang members, drug traffickers and terrorists to enter our country unchecked, and they support the ongoing effort to deport as many violent criminals as possible.

This left my Democratic colleagues with a choice: Stand up to the loon wing of your party or [defund ICE](#). [They chose the latter](#).

Democratic leaders pretended for more than a month that they would vote to fund ICE if the Trump administration enacted certain reforms. But as DHS adopted new policies, including a plan to have [ICE officers wear body cameras](#), Senate Democrats revealed that it didn't matter what ICE did; they weren't going to vote to reopen the agency under any circumstances.

I don't hate my Democratic colleagues for losing their minds to appease their political base. I don't hate anybody. But the loon wing's dominance has changed how Republicans need to operate if we are ever going to get anything done.

While Democrats performed this song and dance, more than [100,000 DHS employees went without paychecks](#), and chaos unfolded at every airport in America. And when I came to the Senate floor with my resolution to withhold pay from senators during government shutdowns, they blocked it.

They were willing to use the paychecks of federal employees as a political pawn, but they weren't willing to share in that sacrifice themselves. The whole performance made most fair-minded Americans want to stick their heads in an oven.

As the anti-ICE, pro-Karen wing has grown in prominence, Senate Democrats have developed a severe allergy to common-sense policies.

It's why they voted against the One Big Beautiful Bill and the thousands of dollars of tax savings for the average American. And why they melted down when [Republicans](#) voted to rescind more than \$9 billion in woke foreign aid, including funding for "Sesame Street" programs in Iraq, free vasectomies in Zambia and pastry-cooking classes for male prostitutes in Nepal.

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The sad reality is that many of our Democratic colleagues have become unable to engage in good-faith negotiations. Their only tactic is to shut down the government and plunge our country into a dangerous state of chaos.

That's why I was so pleased that Republicans finally agreed to [turn to budget reconciliation to pass ICE funding](#). The 1974 Budget Control Act's reconciliation process established certain circumstances under which the Senate can pass major legislation with just 51 votes instead of the usual 60. This is how we passed the One Big Beautiful Bill last July.

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Last week, we used the reconciliation process to pass [three years of funding for ICE](#) and Border Patrol. This will ensure that the Trump administration can continue to keep our border secure and remove dangerous criminals from our country well into the future.

But we don't have to stop there. The Budget Control Act offers each Congress [at least three opportunities to use](#) the reconciliation process to address concerns facing the American people. We should use them all.

Since we passed the One Big Beautiful Bill last July, I have been urging my fellow senators to put reconciliation to use to address the [cost of living](#) in America. When moms and dads try to sleep at night, and they can't, it's because they're thinking about how expensive life has become since President Biden was in office.

The One Big Beautiful Bill made important changes to our [tax code](#) to keep more money in people's pockets, including no tax on tips, overtime and some [Social Security benefits](#). But we can do a lot more to help Americans make ends meet through reconciliation.

Senate Democrats aren't just holding ICE hostage on behalf of the loon wing of their party. They're stopping every effort we make to improve the lives of the American people. If we want to fulfill all the other promises we made to American families, reconciliation is our only opportunity. I hope we won't waste it.